

# Man's body found near canal

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Police are investigating the death of a man whose body was found on a canal road near a Grand Junction home Sunday afternoon.

Police received a report at 12:10 p.m. about a man who was "face-down, not moving," behind a home at 2301 N. 20th Street, according to Grand Junction Police Sgt. Brandon Ludwig. The man — an adult — was

dead when police arrived.

Ludwig said it didn't appear that the man's death was suspicious at the outset of the call; however, said the investigation will remain ongoing pending an autopsy by the Mesa County Coroner's Office.

Ludwig said police know the man's identity but are not releasing his name until family has been notified.

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The winning photo will be featured on our Halloween page found in Friday, October 26th Out & About. A prize from Modern Classic Motors will be given to the winner.

Vote online: [GJSentinel.com/contest](http://GJSentinel.com/contest)

Deadline to vote is Wednesday, Oct. 24th, 2018.  
By submitting your photos, you are agreeing to let The Daily Sentinel to publish your photos in print and online.

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11/25, Sunday.....	11/20, Tuesday, 4 PM	
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11/25, Real Estate Weekly.....	11/23, Friday, Noon
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# FIRST DRAFT

# Mystery surrounds ancient remains

Fifty years ago this winter, Grand Junction High School was abuzz with the story of an Indian mummy — the desiccated remains of an ancient Native American child. Through the school's Student Body Association, students raised about \$300 to acquire the remains of what was then known as the Historical Museum, and the body was put on display early in 1969.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

Half a century later, both the origin of the tiny body and its disposition remain a mystery.

"The last time anybody saw the remains for sure was in 1972 at the museum," said Erin Schmitz, the current curator of collections and archives at the Museums of Western Colorado, which evolved from the Historical Museum.

The mystery involves possible looters of Indian artifacts from Utah and the first director of the Museum of Western Colorado, whose actions wouldn't meet modern museum standards.

Schmitz, who has been with the museum for nearly four years, first heard of the remains in March of this year from Priscilla Magnall with the Mesa County Historical Society.

About the same time, Schmitz was updating required documentation for the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. The law requires museums and other institutions to return native remains to the appropriate Indian tribe when that can be determined, and to maintain records of remains when no tribal representatives claim them.

Schmitz said the Museums of Western Colorado holds the remains of 16 individuals, most of whom are believed to be Fremont people who lived in Utah, Colorado and other parts of the West from 2,000 years ago to about 700 years ago.

Five sets of remains were from the Turner-Look site excavated in eastern Utah in the late 1940s. For the remainder, records are sketchy, and it's difficult to determine exactly where they came from, Schmitz said.

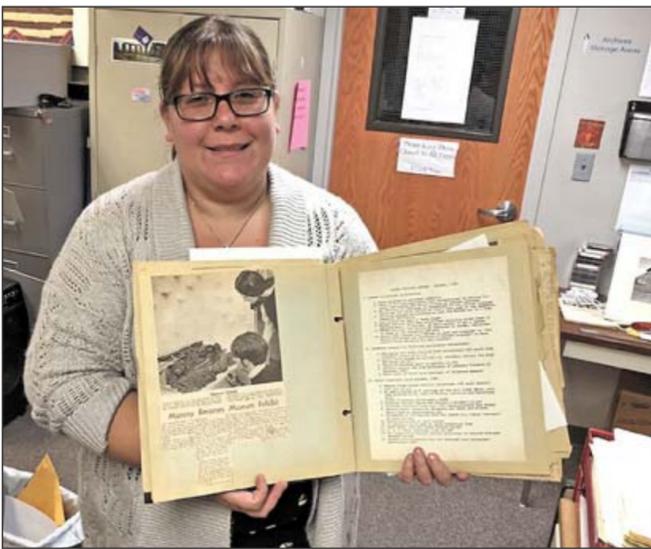
Consequently, Schmitz worked with Melissa Conner, professor of forensic anthropology at Colorado Mesa University, to attempt to determine the heritage of each set of remains. Based on Conner's examinations, it is believed most of the remains are Fremont, while one may be Ute, Schmitz said.

All are kept in special boxes for remains and are stored in a vault, she added.

However, since Conner performed her forensic examinations, another set of remains



This headline from a January 1969 news article in The Daily Sentinel tells of the remains to be displayed at the museum in Grand Junction.



Erin Schmitz, curator of collections and archives at the Museums of Western Colorado, holds a copy of a Daily Sentinel newspaper article from January 1969. It discusses the remains being put on display at that time at the museum in Grand Junction.

BOB SILBERNAGEL/  
Special to the Sentinel

has been discovered at the museum.

"An intern found it two years ago while doing an inventory of some of our collections," Schmitz said. "It's an almost complete set of remains."

The body is small enough it could fit the description of the Indian child from the 1969 exhibit. But it doesn't have all of the artifacts with it that were listed in a January 1969 article in The Daily Sentinel.

The newspaper reported the body was "wrapped in rabbit skins, then in a blanket of rabbit fur and feathers. The bundle was enclosed in a woven mat of sticks, probably willows, and buried under the edge of a huge boulder."

Schmitz hopes to have Conner to examine the discovered remains.

Even that, however, may not prove whether the remains found two years ago are indeed those from 1969. That's because it's not absolutely certain where the body came from 50 years ago, and how it arrived at the museum.

The high school had a naming contest for the remains, and the remains were officially called "Shakuntala." That's ironic, because the name comes from Hindu lore, rather than American Indian.

The 1969 Sentinel article said the remains were discovered in a canyon about 3.5 miles east of Blanding, Utah. But the article did not say who sold or loaned the remains to the museum.

In 2011, a former Mesa State

College student named Korie Johnson wrote a report for a graduate program at Oklahoma State University about her efforts to determine where the remains came from and where they might have ended up.

She spoke to a Blanding man, whose family was well known as collectors of Native American artifacts, and family members sometimes ran afoul of the law for illegally obtaining artifacts on public lands.

The man, since deceased, told Johnson he had loaned up to 300 artifacts from his collection to the museum in Grand Junction. But, he said, he had no knowledge of any human remains.

Then Museum Director Mike Mayfield did not make clear who had provided the remains.

He told the Sentinel that he believed the remains were of an Anasazi (now called Ancestral Puebloan) probably from the Pueblo I or Pueblo II period — meaning the body dated from 750 A.D. to 1150 A.D.

But there is no evidence that Mayfield ever had the remains examined by an expert, so their actual date and heritage are unclear. And there is no proof that the remains were found near Blanding.

"They could have come from anywhere," Schmitz said.

They could have been Ancestral Puebloan, Fremont, perhaps even earlier Ute or from another tribe.

There has also been speculation — but no evidence — that Mayfield may have taken

the remains with him when he left the museum in the 1970s and perhaps given them to another institution. Mayfield is also deceased.

Perhaps the remains went to Wyoming, where Mayfield moved after leaving Grand Junction. Or they might eventually have been donated to the Anasazi Heritage Center near Cortez, although that facility didn't open until 1988.

Schmitz hopes to contact these and other institutions to see if they have any records of remains from around 1969.

But she hasn't eliminated the possibility that they may be the remains found in the box at the Museums of Western Colorado two years ago, she said.

If the body that once was exhibited at the museum is ever found, it is very unlikely it will be put on public display again, she said. Unlike the late 1960s, when people and institutions often purchased and displayed Native American remains, that is almost never done today.

Instead, institutions now work closely with Indian tribes to attempt to identify the descendants of ancient remains and, when possible, to rebury them with appropriate tribal rituals.

Sources: Erin Schmitz of the Museums of Western Colorado; The Daily Sentinel; "On the Trail of Shakuntala," by Korie Johnson.

Bob Silbernagel's email is [bobsilbernagel@gmail.com](mailto:bobsilbernagel@gmail.com).

## BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF



### Suspect sought in heist of jewelry on Main Street

Police are looking for information about a man suspected of stealing jewelry from a company in the 600 block of Main Street on Sept. 30.

According to a release from Crime Stoppers of Mesa County, security cameras at Cooley Designs, 602 Main St., captured im-

ages of a white man with short brown hair, a mustache and goatee using something to open locked jewelry cases. Security footage captured images of the man stealing two gold band rings, one of which contained a single diamond, the release said.

The jewelry was valued at more than \$3,700.

The man was last seen wearing a green T-shirt that says "Party Animal," blue jeans and sunglasses on top of his head.

He left the store onto Main Street with a younger man, the release said.

Crime Stoppers is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for tips that lead to an arrest. Tipsters may remain anonymous, and can call 970-241-7867 with information.

### According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

■ Christopher Foster, 33, is accused of drug possession with intent to distribute Wednesday.

■ Bobbi Bronson, 33, is accused of drug possession with intent to distribute Wednesday.

■ Bernard Hong, 29, is accused of driving under the influence and other offenses Wednesday.

■ Trevor Leech, 25, is accused of harassment as domestic violence Wednesday.

■ Rory Nankervis, 31, is accused of driving under the influence and other offenses Friday.

■ Property valued at more than \$300 was stolen from a vehicle in the 400 block of Rood Avenue on Wednesday.

■ Johnathon Bates, 26, is accused of assault as domestic violence Friday.

■ James N. Lofting, 39, was cited on suspicion of shoplift.

■ Nicole Tafoya, 40, is accused of assault as domestic violence on Friday.

■ Ashley Smith, 27, is accused of drug possession on Friday.

■ Nicki Flowers, 26, is accused of assault as domestic violence on Saturday.

■ A burglary involving two suspects wearing masks was reported in the 1300 block of North 19th Street on Saturday.

■ Property valued at less than \$2,000 was stolen from a garage in the 1300 block of Rood Avenue on Oct. 8.

■ Property valued at less than \$750 was stolen from a vehicle in the 1300 block of Rood Avenue on Wednesday.

### According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

■ A theft was reported in the 2900 block of North Avenue on Oct. 12.

■ A theft from a vehicle was reported in the 3000 block of Colorado Avenue on Tuesday.

■ A man accidentally shot himself in the 3200 block of Bunting Avenue on Friday.

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